India's Patent Ordinance

1259. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether USA has protested at W.T.O. over India's Patent Ordinance;

(b) if so, the grounds on which objection has been raised; and

(c) the details of India's clarification/ reaction to the points raised?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) US requested consultations with Government of India under Article 4 of the Understanding of Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU) on the Patent (Amendment) Ordinance, 1999 promulgated by India as they wanted clarification and more details information on the Ordinance. Accordingly consultations were held at Geneva on 11.2.99. India clarified that the Ordinance was in conformity with its obligations under the TRIP'S Agreement.

Gold Imports in the Country

1260. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity of gold imports into the country in the current fiscal year;

(b) the expected quantity of gold imports in the current fiscal year; and

(c) what is the trend in the value of gold in the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Total quantity of gold imported into the country in the current fiscal year 1998-99 (up to January, 99) is 442.18 M.T.

(b) Expected quantity of gold imports in the current fiscal year is likely to be around 550 tonnes.

(c) Trend in the value of gold in Mumbai in the last three years are as under:—

1996	Rs. 5190	per 10 gms.
1997	Rs. 4654	per 10 gms.
1998	Rs. 4048	per 10 gms.

WTO's order on Export of Shrimp

1261. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that US has sought fifteen months' time to implement the World Trade Organisation order asking Washington to lift the ban on shrimp imports from India; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Consultation were held between US and India along with other Co-complainants in this case. On 21.1.99 the concerned parties agreed to 13 months from the date of adoption of the Appellate body Report (6.11.98) as the reasonable period of time under Article 21.3 of the Understanding on Rules and procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputs (DSU) for the United States to comply with the recommendation of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB).

Problems Faced by Tobacoo Farmers

1262. SHRI C. RAMACHAN DRAIAH: Will the Minister of COM MERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the To-bacoo Board has not interacted adequately with C.T.R.I. and other organisations in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether it is also a fact that to-bacoo farmers have faced losses due to bad quality seedlings recently in Andhra Pradesh;